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REFLECTIONS ON THE HISTORY OF LOT.

“And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.” Gen. xix. 29.

It is the distinguished and peculiar character of scripture, that it is all of divine inspiration, and that it is all “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” This character, then, belongs to the historical and narrative parts, as well as to those which are doctrinal and preceptive. Every part is designed and calculated to afford instruction. To teach by example is the peculiar but pleasing province of history. And although it does not supercede the necessity of didactic precepts, yet it frequently presents instruction in a more tangible, and not less useful form. Faithful history exhibits men in their true character: their virtues are held up to view as examples worthy of imitation; and their vices, as beacons to warn us of the rocks on which they struck. It is a peculiarity to be found in the Bible alone, that it always exhibits the faults, even of those men who were the most honoured instruments in establishing its religion, without any attempt at palliation, or concealment. And the whole chain of sacred history establishes the fact, that God never suffers sin uncorrected in any of his own children. And a very striking analogy in proportion, may generally be discovered between the sin and the correction.

Among those whose lives are recorded in the sacred collection, few, if any, contain more important instruction, or afford a more melancholy instance of the mutability of human affairs, than the story of Lot. Common as it is, yet it is still an affecting

spectacle, to see a family fall from a respectable and an affluent station, in even the ordinary ranks of life, to distress and penury. It is distressing enough when no stain is attached to their moral character. We should never witness such a sight, without being deeply impressed with the truth—"That it is not in man to direct his steps." We should consider it as an admonition to ourselves "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall."

All that is proposed in this essay, is to notice some of the more prominent events in Lot's life, and briefly to suggest some of the practical admonitions which this history is designed and calculated to afford.

I. Lot was a highly favoured person in being called from the depths of ignorance which prevailed in his family, and where he was born, to the knowledge and worship of the true God. Lot was the son of Haran, the brother of Abraham. His father died while he was young, most probably before he attained to the age of manhood. In consequence of this bereavement, Lot was taken back into the family of his grandfather, Terah, who was still living, and while Abraham remained in his father's family. We cannot positively determine whether the knowledge of the true God had become altogether extinct among the posterity of Shem or not, before the calling of Abraham. But no evidence is left on record of the worship of the true God being observed among them, for a considerable time before it made its appearance in the family of Abraham. We may rather infer that it was either unknown or unobserved in the family of Haran Lot's father. And although it might appear a severe dispensation of providence, at the time, to Lot, to be deprived at so early an age of the instructions and guardianship of his father; yet God more than made up for this stroke, by bringing him into the family where Abraham was, and where he had an opportunity of observing the worship of the true God. Those dispensations of providence, which appear to us, at first, the severest afflictions, often prove our greatest mercies. Lot found a kind friend as well as a spiritual guide in Abraham, by whom he was doubtless first instructed in the knowledge of the true religion. And Lot seems at first to have had a grateful sense of the obligations which he was under to Abraham, and a proper estimate of the value of his privilege in enjoying the company of so good a man; for he willingly accompanied Abraham, from the land of his nativity, in all his wanderings. "So Abraham departed, as the Lord had spoken; and Lot went with him; and Abraham was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran." Gen. xii. 4. The

society of religious and godly friends, is one of the greatest privileges which we can enjoy, especially when we are young. The care of a friend who can instruct us in our spiritual concerns, is infinitely more valuable than the kindest attention of those who are only concerned for our temporal welfare.

II. Lot was greatly prospered in worldly circumstances. He had great possessions in flocks, and herds and tents. Gen. xiii. 5. God had liberally betowed upon him temporal as well as spiritual favours. The history does not contain so particular an account of Lot's wealth as it does of Abraham's. But it is not unreasonable to suppose that there was some proportion between them. Abraham was considered a mighty prince among the sons of Heth. He could arm three hundred and eighteen men, born in his house. And if these bore the same proportion to the rest of his household, that those who are able to bear arms are now considered to do, to the rest of the population, he must have had not less than twenty-five hundred servants or subjects born in his house, and other wealth in proportion. And if even Lot's wealth was considerably inferior to Abraham's, he might still be very wealthy. It was however sufficiently great to render it inconvenient for Lot and Abraham to dwell together: "the land was not able to bear them;" could not yield sufficient pasturage for their immense flocks and herds. It would have been a happy circumstance for Lot, if this had been the greatest evil that grew out of the increase of his property. We have the best of testimony that he was a righteous man. And he should not have suffered any consideration of wealth or property to have interfered to destroy his society with Abraham. It was worth more to him than all the flocks and herds and tents which he possessed. But Lot seems now to have estimated more lightly the value of Abraham's society, than when he left the land of his nativity for its sake. When he heard of the dissensions between his herdmen and those of Abraham, we do not hear of his making any effort to suppress them. Abraham, who had probably discovered a change in Lot's sentiments or conduct, was unwilling that any animosity should exist even among their servants. And the more especially before those, who were either ignorant of, or enemies to, the true religion: "for the Canaanite and the Perizite dwelt then in the land." "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." And how often do the dissensions among brother professors, as well as those who are united by the ties of nature, bring reproach upon our most holy religion, and give the enemy occasion to blaspheme? To avoid this evil, Abraham proposed a separation; and the choice of countries he

left to Lot. "If thou wilt take to the left hand, then will I go to the right; or, if thou depart to the right, then will I go to the left."

III. Lot acceded to the proposition. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abraham dwelt in the land of Canaan; and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Gen. xiii. 10-13. There seems to be a period in almost every man's life, in which one step decides his whole future course. And this seems to have been the crisis in the history of Lot's life. He should have deliberated seriously, he should have asked counsel of Him, who alone can direct man's steps, and in whose hand, are all our ways, before he took so important a step. And when he did make a choice of a country for his future residence, he should have been influenced in his choice, by the best and most judicious of motives. As this seems to have been the great and primary error in Lot's life, and the one to which most of his subsequent miseries may be traced, I shall notice it a little more particularly.

1st. Lot seems to have lost sight of the advantages of Abraham's society. For he at once acceded to the proposition. His conduct on this occasion was very different from that of an humble but distinguished descendant of his, long afterwards, the amiable Ruth. When her friend, Naomi, who had probably been instrumental in bringing her to a knowledge of the true God, proposed a separation to her, she utterly and without hesitation refused, and entreated her mother-in-law to say no more to her on that subject. But there does not seem to have been the least reluctance, on the part of Lot, manifested at a separation. The society of religious friends is too great a blessing and privilege to be voluntarily parted with, on slight grounds. Lot should have considered whether this evil could not have been remedied by other means. Should he not have parted with some of his wealth or dismissed his contentious servants, rather than have separated from his friend? We all need the stimulus of religious society, to encourage and keep us in mind of our duty.—"As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the face of a man his friend."

2d. Lot did not exercise that deference which was due towards Abraham, as his superior in age, in dignity, and in rela-

tionship. As a matter of respect, he should have referred the choice to Abraham himself. But he seemed ready to avail himself of the disinterested generosity of his friend. It is to be feared that a worldly spirit had already taken possession of his mind; that the increase of his wealth, had increased, rather than satisfied, his desires. Solomon has said, "that as riches increase, they are increased that eat them; and that there was no profit in them, save the beholding of them with the eyes." It is generally the case, that as riches increase, the desire for more increases in as great, if not a greater proportion; which appears to have been too much the case with Lot. For as soon as the choice was referred to him, he lifted up his eyes and viewed the land. His eye was caught by the plain of Jordan, which was well watered every where; and consequently favourable to the increase of his property.

3d. Lot did not make his choice with proper principles or from proper motives. When it does become necessary and proper for a person to change his residence, he should not altogether disregard the situation of different places, with respect to the secular pursuits in which he may be engaged: But then this should not be the first thing that should attract his attention. In making his choice, regard should chiefly be had to the religious privileges to be enjoyed. Spiritual privileges are as much superior to temporal, and should be of as much more consideration, as eternity is longer than the shortest possible life of man. But Lot seems to have been influenced solely in his choice by temporal considerations. "The plain of Jordan was well watered every where." This determined his choice. He chose the plain, and "dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent towards Sodom." O, fatal error! Lot paid no regard to the moral character of the inhabitants of that land. For "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." It is always dangerous to throw one's self in the way of temptation.—And nothing can be more pernicious to the religious character, than irreligious company. It is a divine maxim—"Evil communications corrupt good manners." It is almost impossible for us to associate a single day, or even an hour, with the openly profane and wicked, without sustaining great injury in our religious character. The influence of bad or irreligious society is so exceedingly baleful that it seizes and affects us like a pestilence:—and like error in doctrine, it will "eat as doth a canker." But the character of the inhabitants of Sodom seems to have presented no obstacle to Lot's settling among them; though their wicked and filthy conversation afterwards vexed his righteous

soul from day to day. But he should have considered this sooner; and if he had no concern or uneasiness on his own account, he should have reflected that he had a family, whose religious principles might not be so well established as his own, and for whose instruction and education he was responsible. He ought to have known that it would be impossible to raise a family without being affected, if not deeply contaminated, by the example of, and from their intercourse with, such neighbours. But this is not the whole extent of the evil. With whom could his family connect themselves in marriage? For he had daughters. Could he reasonably suppose that it would be with any other than those among whom they lived, and with whom they must necessarily associate? And what could a man of Lot's knowledge, promise himself from such a connexion? We may readily suppose, that Lot took all the care of the religious education of his daughters, which a pious father, circumstanced as he was, could. But still their sense of the duties and the importance of religion, could not be so strong as if they had been brought up in religious society. For even religious habits are necessary and useful to fortify us against temptation. Now suppose Lot's daughters connected with the Sodomites in marriage; and one of two things must take place. They must either abandon the religion of their father, give up the worship of the true God of Abraham, and conform to the practices, and adopt the sentiments of the Sodomites; or, if they retained the knowledge of the true God, with a sense of the obligations they were under to observe his worship, their lives must have been, to the last degree, wretched and miserable.—How, then, could they view their husbands! whose character, we must suppose, corresponded with the general character of their countrymen—"they were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." But their own situation might not be the bitterest cup in their portion. They might have an offspring, for whose eternal welfare they were solicitous. And can there be a more agonizing, a more heart-rending thought, than, that we are raising up children, for whom we can have scarcely a hope, but that their eternal portion must be to dwell with "everlasting burnings?" The idea is awfully horrid and appalling. But Lot could promise himself nothing better: nor can any parent who places himself and family in the same or a similar situation.—But, regardless of all religious considerations, Lot chose the cities of the plain, and among these, the city of Sodom, as his future residence. But mark the sequel of his story.

IV. The next thing we hear of Lot, is, that he and his family, with all his goods, are carried off prisoners of war. Gen. xiv. 12.

This fine country was not exempted from the calamity of war.—The cry of the wickedness of its inhabitants had already gone up to heaven; and now they justly merited the punishment which was soon afterwards inflicted upon them. But out of kindness to Lot, and to give him a warning that wrath was treasuring up against the day of wrath, for the place where he dwelt; and, also, to give its wicked inhabitants a little longer time to repent, God deferred, for a while, his weightier judgments, and first visited them with the scourge of war. For God usually commences with milder means when he begins to punish a people for their iniquity; but if these are disregarded, he increases in severity, until he accomplishes his purposes. Lot was involved in the common calamity; all his immense wealth, upon which his heart was so much set, was now in the hands of his enemies, and himself and his family captives under their power. He would now, doubtless, have been glad had he suppressed the contentious disposition of his servants, that he might have continued in the neighbourhood of his friend Abraham, where he could have enjoyed his protection. He would, very probably, have been willing to have parted with his goods, that he and his family might have been redeemed from captivity. But Abraham had not forgotten him; so soon as he heard that Lot was taken captive, he armed his trained servants and pursued Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and rescued not only Lot, and his goods, but brought back all the spoil which they had taken away. This should have been a sufficient intimation to Lot to have left a country where wickedness so much abounded, and where, on this account, he was exposed to so great calamities. It should also have taught him the importance of being near so valuable and so efficient a friend as Abraham. But, as is too frequently the case, when the immediate danger is removed, Lot dismisses his apprehensions for the future, and falls back into his former state of security. Judgments, misimproved, have always a hardening tendency. And Lot seems not to have discerned the hand of God in this chastisement. He returned to Sodom and continued his residence there as formerly. We hear no more of him until the measure of the cup of Sodom's iniquity was full.

V. The next account we have of Lot, is on the eve of that eventful night, on which God poured out on Sodom and its devoted inhabitants, the vials of his wrath, which were in reservation for them. As Lot sat in the gate of the city in the evening, he saw, what he supposed to be, two men approaching the gate; their appearance was, doubtless, such as warranted him in concluding that they were not citizens of Sodom. He had not lost

his habits of hospitality. So soon as he saw them, he rose up to meet them, and received them with all that urbanity of manners, of which his friend Abraham was so eminent a pattern, and offered them the hospitality of his house. When the angels, for such the strangers were, had sufficiently tested his sincerity, they entered his house and partook of his hospitality. But they had not long been there before they had demonstrative evidence of the abominable wickedness of the inhabitants of Sodom, and an awful proof of the pernicious influence of bad society even on the best of men. The vilest and most unnatural wickedness had gained such an ascendancy in Sodom, as to set shame at defiance, and trample on even the appearance of decency. The most debasing immorality, and such as ought not to be so much as named among Christians, unblushingly and openly walked the streets of the city. This called for the immediate and most exemplary punishment from heaven. The repositories of God's wrath could be no longer restrained. The very strangers, entertained by Lot, and who were the occasion of the Sodomites surrounding his house, were the commissioned ministers of vengeance; and that night was not to pass, until they would kindle on these poor bessotted wretches, the flames of "eternal fire." But alas! for the frailty of human nature! The laws of hospitality are indeed to be held sacredly inviolable. Our holy religion enjoins it, as well as the common sense of mankind; and this was especially necessary in that abandoned city. But no extremity could justify the expedient to which Lot proposed to resort, for their preservation. Nothing can be said by way of apology. And although we may fear, that the out-breakings of the Sodomites had been so frequent, that their crimes had in some measure become more familiar and less abhorrent to Lot, than they should have been, or than they once were; yet his conduct, on this occasion, can never be accounted for, without supposing that the confusion produced by the emergency, caused him to utter the words unadvisedly: That it was a rash proposition, from which his more reflecting judgment would have recoiled. It was, under any circumstances, a very sinful one. Of two physical evils, we should choose the least; but of two moral evils, we should choose neither. Upon no account should we do evil, that good may come. This was, doubtless, a very trying period to Lot. He was evidently unable to extricate himself from his difficulties. But he should have called mightily upon his God—the God of Abraham. Whether he now remembered his duty or not, God, who often appears a present help in times of the greatest need, now interfered for his deliverance. It was at this moment, that the

strangers, who had heretofore been entertained and considered by Lot as mere men, discovered themselves, by their interference for his safety, and the protection of his family. When these abandoned Sodomites surrounded the house, threatening to break it open, and Lot could not prevail upon them to retire, the angels put forth their hands and drew Lot into the house, and smote them with blindness, so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

VI. The angels now informed Lot of their commission to destroy the city, ("the Lord hath sent us to destroy it," Gen. xix. 13.) and directed him to prepare his family for escaping from the destruction. They very kindly and indulgently enquired whether his family consisted of any more besides those with him in the house. It seems, that his wife and two daughters only, were with him. Of the other connections, or members of his family, we only hear of "his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters;" by which it appears, that he had daughters married, though this is the first and only account we have of them. It would be an unaccountable straining of the text, to suppose that the sons-in-law, here spoken of, were some young men who had engaged the two daughters still with him in the house; though some have gone into this opinion. We are not informed particularly of the standing and character of Lot's sons-in-law; but they were doubtless young gentlemen of as high pretensions as any in Sodom; perhaps the sons of noblemen of the city. For Lot was a great and wealthy man, and his daughters would be considered suitable matches for the nobles of the land. We may suppose, they were the choice of the very flower of Sodom. Whether Lot and his wife consented to the marriage of their daughters with these young Sodomites, or whether Lot did for awhile object, on account of the moral character of these young men, and their want of religion, but at length yielded to the entreaties and persuasions of his wife and the inclinations of his daughters, we are not particularly informed. But we have too much reason to fear, for human nature is about the same in every age, that they were flattered with the prospects of their daughters. Though the young men were not religious, they were wealthy, and might make kind and affectionate husbands; and they were, doubtless, connected with the first families in Sodom. Alas! how many thousands, in every age, have to lament the bitter effects of such reasoning! But although this connection was fatal to the daughters of Lot; yet it shows, that it is a great blessing to be connected with and married into a religious family. These young Sodomites, wicked as they certainly were, who had married Lot's

daughters, had the offer of their lives, and of deliverance from the impending destruction, in consequence of their connection with this family. Lot was convinced that the destruction of the city was at hand. Availing himself of the indulgence of the angels, he went to warn his sons-in-law of their danger, and called on them to "up and hasten out of the place, for the Lord would surely destroy the city;" but Lot "seemed to them as one that mocked." When he came to them in haste, in the darkness of the night, and awakened them out of their sleep, with such news, they doubtless supposed, that the disturbances about his house in the forepart of the night, had turned the poor old man's brain, and that all this alarm was nothing but the effects of a disturbed imagination. They received and treated it as such; and again betook themselves to their repose. But very different were the feelings of Lot, as he returned to his own house. All hopes of saving, at least a part of his own family, were now vanished. He had been laughed at, by his own children, for his anxious and paternal solicitude to save them from immediate destruction.—And all that wealth, for which he had toiled so long, and which was the principal occasion of his separating from Abraham and choosing Sodom for the place of his residence, was now not only to be lost; but it was to be left as fuel to augment the flames which must quickly consume this fair country; and in the destruction of which, all his neighbours, and part of his own children, must now be enveloped.

VII. Lot was a father. Is it to be wondered at that frail nature should "linger?" His "bowels yearned" for his own offspring. Must "the vengeance of eternal fire," (Jude 7.) now kindle upon them? The hour for the destruction had arrived; the angels were hurrying his departure; which was now all that delayed the execution of their commission. Lot "lingered."—But the Lord was merciful to him; "and while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hands of his two daughters, and brought them forth, and set them without the city." Of what value is even one good man in a city! Weak as Lot was, and far astray as he had certainly gone, yet he was a good man; and the Lord could do nothing to Sodom until he was out of the city; and for his sake Zoar was spared. Thus was Lot hurried out of Sodom; all was left but his wife and his two daughters. But he had yet to drink the dregs of the cup of his misery. They were not only hurried away, without an opportunity of bidding a last farewell to those whom they should never more behold; but they were commanded "not to look behind." But his wife—alas! poor woman, her

heart was still too much in Sodom—cast one last look, and she was a motionless statue. She became a pillar of salt. How fondly could we imagine, that Lot's miseries were now terminated—that he had exhausted the dregs of his cup—and that he would retire to some peaceful and innocent retreat with his daughters, where he would spend the remainder of his life in the exercise of devotion, piety and repentance, and close his days in peace.—But no. This is no romantic fiction; it is a true picture; it is real life. The baleful influence of bad society is not so soon over. Corrupted manners are not so soon corrected.

VIII. The history of this poor man, for we may now justly call him *poor*, closes with an awful instance of the frailty and depravity of human nature. "How are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon!" But no; the curtain of oblivion cannot conceal it. Heaven and earth must pass away before the record of it can be erased. But here the melancholy history is dropped. The divine historian does not even record a notice of his death. And his preservation from the overthrow, seems to have been more out of kindness to Abraham than on his own account. "God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities of the plain." We know he found repentance; but his name is never afterwards mentioned, only by way of warning.

What instructive lessons does this eventful history teach us! O, that all, who read, may have grace given them, wisely to improve it.

I. How strikingly does it illustrate the observation of an apostle, that "they that would be rich, fall into diverse temptations, and into the snare of the devil! To this may be traced Lot's separation from Abraham, and his fixing his residence in Sodom. The country was desirable; but the inhabitants were "sinners exceedingly before the Lord;" and to his connection and intercourse with these people, may all his subsequent calamities be traced. How often do people, for the uncertain prospect of bettering their worldly circumstances, forsake the privileges of religious society and gospel ordinances? The pretext often is, that it is for the sake of their children, that they may be enabled to settle them better in life. But let such parents look at the story of Lot, and learn, that they who remove their children from the opportunities of religious society, and the privileges of God's house, are using the direct means to cut them off from a portion infinitely more valuable, than all the gold and silver ever extracted from the bowels of the earth. He would be infinitely

the loser who should gain the whole world and lose his own soul. And to what awful lengths may not one step from the path of duty lead? Especially, let parents, who are responsible for the religious education of their children, who have deliberately and voluntarily come under baptismal vows, consider; let them pause and look at the awful consequences, before they cut themselves off from *any* of the means which God has appointed, to enable them to bring up their children, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The maxim of the wise man stands good to this day, and will to the end of time,—“Train up a child in the way in which he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

2. How forcibly does this brief history show the vanity of earthly riches! Lot was so rich before he went to Sodom, that the land was not able to bear him in the same neighbourhood with Abraham; but he left it poor enough. Before, he must have his residence “in the *cities* of the plain;” but now, he dwelt in a *cave* in the mountains. When we step out of the path of duty, how soon can God blast our fairest prospects! How easily can “riches make to themselves wings and flee away!” O, for riches in heaven, where moth cannot corrupt, nor rust corrode, nor thieves break through and steal. Reader, mayest thou and I, have *our* portion there! M.

FOR THE RELIGIOUS MONITOR.

ANALYSIS OF HEBREWS

viii. 6—13.*

In the first and second verses of this chapter, the apostle gives a summary of all the preceding chapters, and indeed, of the whole epistle. In the 3d, 4th, and 5th verses, he confirms the grand proposition laid down in the first: And this he does, *First*. By stating, the end of a high priest, in general. (v. 3.) 2d. By showing that the end of Christ's priesthood was the same with that of Aaron's. (v. 4.) And 3d. By showing that Aaron's had only the shadow of a priesthood, of which the better one of Christ, is the substance. (v. 5.) From the 6th verse to the 13th, inclusive, we have an expansion of the idea contained in the grand summary of the 1st and 2d verses, with a confirmation of the doctrine from Old Testament prophecy. In the portion of scrip-

* Intended as a confirmation of the use made of this scripture, in an article entitled, “*Separate Constitution and Communion of the Associate Church Vindicated*,” the continuation of which article, is delayed in order to make way for this digression. See the June and September numbers of the current volume.

ture to be analyzed, we have, 1st. The excellence of Christ's ministry. 2d. A proof of this excellence, in the excellence of his covenant. 3d. A proof the excellence of his covenant in the faultiness of the old, which it supercedes. 4th. The faultiness of the old, and the excellence of the new, both proved from Old Testament prophecy. 5th. The abolition of the old is pronounced in conclusion.

I. The excellency of Christ's ministry. v. 6. "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry."

1. The subject spoken of. *HE*, that is, Jesus, according to chap. vii. 22, from which the discourse continues uninterrupted. The glories of his person had been declared in a variety of particulars. He is the Son of God. chap. i. 2. A distinct person from the Father. The Father's co-equal. v. 3. The eternally begotten. v. 5. Whose generation excels that of angels. v. 4—14. Recognised in scripture, as the supreme and eternal Jehovah, and the Creator of the heavens and the earth. v. 10—12. The MESSIAH, the eternally anointed of the Father, (v. 8, 9.) and consecrated by oath for evermore. chap. vii. 28. Who became man, (chap. ii. 9.) by taking on him the seed of Abraham. v. 16. Who hath purged our sins, (chap. i. 3.) by his own death. chap. ii. 9, 10. Who is exalted to the right hand of the majesty on high, (chap. i. 3.) the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens. chap. viii. 1. There he hath forever sat down, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. chap. x. 12, 13. He will ultimately award vengeance and recompense to his enemies, and will judge his people. For he is the Lord, the living God; and it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands. v. 29—31.

2. The thing predicated of him. "He hath obtained a more excellent ministry." It is necessary to consider the ministry, its excellence, and the obtaining of it.

1st. The *ministry*,* or *divine service*. Such a ministry, or liturgy, as the priests performed in the temple. chap. ix. 21. and x. 11. Such as gospel ministers perform by appointment of Christ. Rom. i. 9. The word denotes an official service in sacred things. It implies an instituted worship, an instituted office, and the exercise of that office by one regularly called to fill it, and actually employed in conducting the worship. The liturgy, ministry, or official worship, performed by Christ, consisted in his offering himself through the eternal Spirit—(chap. ix. 14.) in his perpetual intercession, (chap. vii. 25.) and in his application of the

* *Leitourgias*.

blessings purchased, by administration of the word and ordinances. chap. xii. 24—26. Mat. xxviii. 18—20.

2d. The *excellence* of the ministry. The Greek word* means a different one. Rom. xii. 6. It is usually taken to express a difference in point of excellence. Gal. iv. 1. Rom. ii. 18. In this sense it admits of degrees of comparison. 1 Cor. 15. 41. Christ's ministry is more excellent than Aaron's,—which implies, that the latter is not destitute of all excellence, but possesses it in an inferior degree. The superior excellence of Christ's ministry may be seen in his solemn consecration to office by oath. chap. vii. 28. In the high end of his office, which is to obtain eternal redemption for us. chap. ix. 12. In the infinite preciousness of his oblation. chap. ix. 14. "He offered himself." In the tabernacle of his ministry. chap. viii. 2. This was his human nature. John i. 14. The word was made flesh, and dwelt,† or tabernacled, among us. In the dignity of the altar which sanctified the gift. This was the eternal Spirit, or divine nature of Christ. chap. ix. 14. Compare Rom. i. 3 and 4. In the unchangeableness of his office. chap. vii. 24. And in the efficacy of his office, for obtaining eternal redemption, purging the conscience, opening and consecrating a new and living way into the holiest, and making ready, on behalf of them who look for him, his second coming in the manifestation of his glory without sin unto salvation. chap. ix. 12—14—28. and x. 19, 20.

3d. The obtaining of the ministry. "He hath obtained." He hath obtained as a lot or portion;‡ it hath befallen him as it were by accident. Thus Dr. Owen. And according to him, the apostle designeth not to express in this word, the *especial* call of Christ to the ministry, but only *in general* that *he had it*, a possession which before he had not. The word, here used, teaches us two great truths concerning Christ's ministry. *First*, The sovereignty of God in instituting it for man's salvation. It is not an attribute of the Godhead, nor a personal property. Christ's eternal power and Godhead, are natural, necessary, and underived. His eternal Sonship, is natural, necessary, and *derived* by eternal generation from the Father. But the ministry of our Lord, is neither natural nor necessary, either to his being or person. It is wholly *derived*. It is acquired as if by lot, and one which, like every other lot, is absolutely of God's disposing. It originates in a sovereign and eternal act of the divine will, purposing in himself the salvation of sinners. *Secondly*, The regularity of Christ's entrance into office. He assumed it not to himself, but

* *Diaphoroterias*.

† *Eschenosen*.

‡ *Teteuche*.

received the lot appointed him. Christ glorified not himself, to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, "thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." chap. v. 5, Thus was he called of God a high priest; (*Gr.*) *hailed* a high priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek. chap. v. 10.

II. A proof of this excellence, in the excellence of the covenant. "By how much also, he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which is established upon better promises."

1. The subject. He, that is, Jesus, is the Mediator. See the particulars concerning him in the discussion of the foregoing proposition.

2. The predicate.—"Is the Mediator of a better covenant."—*Four* things are here to be considered. 1st. the covenant of which Christ is the Mediator. 2d. His Mediatorship. 3d. The covenant with which Christ's is compared. 4th. The excellence of the one in comparison of the other.

1. The covenant of which Christ is the Mediator. And here two queries arise. What covenant is referred to? and what are its properties?

First. What covenant is referred to? It is identified by its Mediator, Jesus. It is identified or distinguished from all others, by its ministry, which consisted, principally, in the offering up of himself. chap. ix. 11—15. The name and thing are the same in the 9th chapter as in the 8th, although we translate it covenant in the one, and testament in the other. It is identified by its blood, that which brought again our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. chap. xiii. 20. And by its efficacy in procuring pardon, sanctification, and eternal inheritance, (chap. x. 16, 17: viii. 10, and ix. 15.) and the efficacy it had even upon those who lived during the period of the old covenant. It is, therefore, distinguished by its antiquity, and perpetuity. It is evident, that all these attributes can belong only to what is usually denominated the covenant of grace.

Second. What are its properties? In order to have the more distinct view of the subject, especially to see in what light Christ's covenant differs from that which preceded it, we must consider the former in a twofold aspect,—as made representatively with Christ from all eternity,—and as made personally with his people in time.

1st. *Representatively.* The scriptures speak of a federal compact existing between Father and Son from everlasting. Prov. viii. 22, 23. Zech. vi. 12. Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4. In *nature*, this covenant is a counsel of peace. It is a purpose and plan, the effect of ineffable wisdom and love, which dwelt everlastingly in the

mind of the blessed Triune. The *parties contracting*, or the persons whose mutual counsel it is, are Jehovah the Father, and the Man whose name is the BRANCH, who is also Jehovah's fellow. Zech. xiii. 7. The *parts* are, a condition and a promise. The Father promises his Son a kingdom, and a seed, both of which shall endure forever. This includes in it the promise of eternal life on behalf of his seed. Tit. i. 2. The Son engages as the condition of the promise, to make his soul an offering for sin. Isa. liii. 10. But this presupposes, and was to be preceded by, a life of holy obedience. Ps. xl. 6—8. Our Lord first offered his soul as a gift, and then as a sacrifice. chap. v. 1. The *relation* in which Christ stands to his people, in this covenant, is that of a federal head and representative; and herein he has the first Adam for a type. Rom. v. 14. His *representation* is, in its general nature, that of a Mediator, and in particular that of a surety. chap. viii. 6. and vii. 22. Wherefore, the condition of obedience unto death, which he performed, is, in the order of nature, antecedent to the promise, and is the only true and proper condition of the covenant.

2d. *Personally*. The scriptures speak no less expressly of God's making a covenant with his people in time. Isa. lv. 3. The difference in the *date* of the two deeds, affords sufficient ground for distinction. The one is from eternity, and the other is temporal, taking place with every elect person, in the day of his effectual calling. The *parties* in this deed of covenant, are, God in the person of his Son, on one side, and his elect people, becoming believers, on the other. It is a covenant confirmed of God in Christ. Gal. iii. 17. The tenor of it is, "Hear, (or believe,) and I will make an everlasting covenant with you." "I appoint, (or covenant,) says Christ, to you a kingdom." Luke xxii. 29. As to the *nature* of this transaction, it consists in a free and gratuitous promise on God's part, and a cordial acceptance on the part of his people. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.—Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Isa. lv. 1. 3. In *matter*, this covenant, as made with believers, is wholly promissory. *I will*, and *you shall*, is the language of it. It is, therefore, called the covenant of promise. Eph. ii. 12. Only it is spoken of in the plural number, as if many, on account of the various revelations and confirmations which have been given of it. Yet, the promise includes, among its choicest blessings, a law to be kept, and the grace of conformity

to that law, in heart and life. "I will put my law into your hearts." And again, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Jer. xxxii. 40. Yet there is, in our text, notwithstanding the connection between the promise and the law, a marked distinction between them. And the law to be kept, as distinguished from the promise, is considered an essential *part* of the covenant, and even the *whole* of it, in the sense in which the word is there used. For the covenant is said to be "established upon the promises." Thus, the promise is the foundation, and the covenant, that is, the law, is established upon it, (*Gr.*) is *legislated* upon it. The *blessing promised*, is the same that was made sure in Christ from all eternity. It is eternal life, (1 John ii. 25.) comprehending in it, all the sure mercies of David. And from the moral relation of man to his Maker, which has been contemned and denied by sin, but is vindicated and established by grace, the law of this covenant, is materially the same that has ever prevailed in every state, in every age, and in every dispensation. 1 John ii. 7. It is the law of the ten commandments, with any positive precepts which God in his infinite wisdom may see meet to enjoin. The parts of this covenant making are two,—an act of promise, and an act of appropriation.—An act of promise on God's part, making a gift and tender of Christ in the gospel: And an act of appropriation on the part of the believer, receiving the blessing as made his in the promise. John i. 12. And for this act, he is prepared or empowered, by the new birth, divinely wrought. John i. 13. But the act of appropriation, includes in it, an act of self dedication. The taking of God to be our God, implies a surrender of ourselves to be his people. The reception of the promise, infers our obligation to obedience to the law which is contained in the promise, as one of its precious blessings.

But, besides this internal and spiritual act of appropriation, there is also an *external* and *formal* making of covenant between God and his professing people. This is the same that is called *profession*. It consists in expressing with the mouth, what is, or is supposed to be, transacted in the heart. Rom. x. 10. And whether the expression of the mouth be sincere or false, it infers a real obligation to obedience. 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.—Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate-saith the Lord." The professed receivers of Christ have put on Christ, and are under law to him. Gal. iii. 27. 1 Cor. ix. 21. It is in this light, that the church's public, solemn vow, and dedication of herself to God, is in scripture denominated *the making of a covenant*. Neh. ix. 31. It is an

open, social, and formal profession with the mouth of what every churchmember is warranted and bound to do with the heart. It is an open and formal *making* of the covenant of grace. It always professes to be this, it really is this, when sincerely and believably performed. Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. For the same covenant may be often made externally, as was this very covenant with Abraham, (Gen. chap. 12, 15, and 17,) and as also was that *man's* covenant, between Jonathan and David.

The immediate *effects* of this transaction, as spiritually done, in the day of effectual calling, are the imputation of Christ's surety righteousness, the impartation of a proper portion of his grace, and an unalienable title to all that is requisite to consummate the believers everlasting blessedness.

The application of the *name* covenant, to express a temporal deed between God and his people, is frequent in the New Testament. It is obviously made in all places where the institution of the Lord's supper is spoken of. Mat. xxvi. 28. Mark xiv. 24.—Luke xxii. 20. 1 Cor. xi. 25. This is the new covenant in my blood. Here we have the first occasion on record of using the phrase,—new covenant, since it had been prophetically pronounced, by the inspired lips of the prophet Jeremiah, to express a blessing of futurity. Here, then, we may look, to find circumstances serving to illustrate and determine the signification of this name. Now, the sacraments are not immediately and properly signs of the eternal counsel between the Father and the Son; but only of its effects, the righteousness and grace resulting from it. Rom. iv. 11. Mark i. 4. And through these, as a medium, the eternal compact, producing them, is brought into view. But in no sense can the sacraments be *seals* of an eternal deed between two divine persons, whose perfection and immeasurable knowledge, and whose mutual, unlimited, and ineffable confidence in each other, admit of no such seal. It is only God's promise to believers in Christ, which is sealed to them on his part; and their engagement to him is sealed to God on their part. It is in this application of the name, new covenant, that it can be at all supposed to express a testamentary deed. It is so explained, by many of the best divines, from Heb. ix. 16, 17.—Christ is the testator, and his people are the legatees. But if the testament be also a covenant, and not merely founded on one, as is plain from the use of the same word for both, then Christ is one of the parties contracting, and his legatees form the other. And here we have a compact, taking place in time, and distinct from that which is without beginning.

The *relation* in which Christ stands to his people, in this cove-

nant, thus considered, is that of trustee, or depository and legate. All fulness dwells in him by the good pleasure of the Father.—Col. i. 19. He is the apostle, (or legate,) and high priest of our profession. Heb. iii. 1. He is, therefore, the unspeakable gift, promised and bestowed in the covenant. He is proclaimed and given as the people's covenant. And through him, as the only proper channel, the whole stream of God's sure mercies, to poor, lost, but believing man, is everlastingly poured. Isa. xlii. 6. and lv. 3.

2. The Mediatorship. Christ is the Mediator, or middle person. The word, in this signification of it, conveys the idea of two parties which are at variance, and to be united in one covenant. Gal. iii. 20. God and men are the parties between whom Christ officiates as Mediator. chap. v. 1. And his office extends to all the concerns which men have with God. It is not then the simple counsel of peace between the Father and the Son, of which the latter is Mediator, else he must mediate between himself and his Father, which is absurd. Our Lord's office is to mediate only in that deed of covenant which takes place, between God and his people, in time. Yet, all that the Mediator has done, or will do, from everlasting to everlasting, in the making, fulfilment or application of the one everlasting covenant, belongs to his Mediatorship, and is necessary to form and perpetuate the union by covenant, between God and his people. This will appear from the following particulars. Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant; and that, considered as a temporal act between God and his spiritual Israel,—

1st. In respect to the promise. Eternal life was promised, in him, before the world began. Tit. i. 2. This is implied in his being appointed heir of all things. Heb. i. 2. The world to come, whereof the apostle here speaks, being put in subjection to him. chap. ii. 5. All that the Father had to bestow in the world of grace, and all in the world of nature, in so far as it is subservient to grace, has been eternally promised and made over to Christ.

2d. In respect of engagement. Ps. xl. 6, 7. Mine ear hast thou bored. Lo, I come. Heb. x. 5—7. Isa. i. 5. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious.

3d. In respect of the fulfilment of the condition engaged, and upon which, as the basis, the eternal promise was predicated.—For the Mediator did not engage as mere cautioner to be responsible for his people's performance. He assumed the obligation as primary and sole undertaker, with the intention of discharging it exclusively himself. He offered both gifts and sacrifices. chap. v. 1. And this consisted in his obedience and sufferings.

v. 8. By this, he is made perfect, as Mediator, and become the author* of eternal salvation. v. 9. That is, nothing more being required of him in order to merit his people's salvation, he is become the *procuring and efficient cause* of it, "to all them that obey him."

4th. In respect of his intercession. chap. vii. 25. This is the most usual office of a Mediator between an offending party and the offended. Thus the wise woman of Tekoah interceded between king David and the guilty Absalom. 2 Sam. 14 chap.—The dignity of the divine majesty, in treating with sinful man, is secured by the personal dignity and legal merit of the intercessor. We have a great high priest, Jesus the Son of God, who is passed into the heavens. chap. iv. 14. There he appears in the presence of God for us. chap. ix. 24.

5th. In respect of external administration. The world to come, that is, the New Testament church, with all its ordinances and worship, is put in subjection to him. chap. ii. 5. This new world is the Son of God's house, and he is faithful as a Son over his own house. chap. iii. 5. He is the apostle, or legate, and high priest of our profession. Every thing relating to our profession, every thing relating to our christian faith, worship, and obedience, is under his just government, and at his disposal. He administers by *legislation*. He appoints the ordinances of his church. He enacts and promulgates the laws of it. chap. iii. 6. i. 8. and v. 9. He exacts obedience of those who are to expect salvation from him. chap. v. 9. He writes his laws upon their hearts, and takes them into the bond of the covenant to fulfil their duty to him. For he it is, who is the husband of the church, speaking in our text. Compare Jer. xxxi. 32. He inflicts the heaviest penalties on those who despise his offers, or apostatize from their profession. chap. x. 29. and xii. 25. Our Lord administers by *revelation*. The eternal promise made him by his Father, he publishes as a free offer, to members of the human family, indiscriminately. chap. iv. 2. He declares with authority the whole system of doctrine to be believed. chap. i. 2. and ii. 12. The gospel is his voice, and the holy Spirit urges it upon our attention, from considerations of the weightiest kind, and denounces the sin of not believing it, as a departure from the living God. chap. iii. 6—12. His prerogative it is, to speak with his voice to the heavens and the earth, and to substitute in their room, a kingdom which cannot be moved.—chap. xii. 25—28. This prerogative he *spiritually* exercised, as Mediator, upon his ascension into heaven, by abolishing a vast

* *Aitios.*

number of ordinances belonging to the former economy, and instituting those which are peculiar to the new. Hag. ii. 6, 7. Eph. iv. 8—12. But this prerogative, he will, in a most awful manner, literally exercise, in the day of the Lord. When from his face the heaven and the earth shall have fled away. (Rev. xx. 11.) then shall the judgment of his mouth, as the last act of external administration, pronounce and unalterably fix, the final destiny of men and angels. Mat. xxv. 31—46.

6th. In respect of efficiency. He is the efficient cause of faith in the heart. chap. xii. 2. This, with all other grace, he operates through the agency of the holy Spirit. chap. x. 29. It is through Jesus Christ that the *whole work of sanctification is carried on to perfection, and strength obtained for the performance of any duty.* chap. xiii. 21. By the mediatorial power of Christ, the promise is made good to all true believers, in their full participation with him of the rest and glory of heaven. chap. iv. 3, 9, 10, 11. and ii. 13.

7th. In respect of access. In him our persons are made pure and acceptable in the eye of the law. chap. x. 21, 22. In his name we supplicate and obtain needed grace. chap. iv. 16. Him, as God man Mediator, we, in company with angels, adore. chap. i. 6. 10. Compare Ps. xcvi. and cix. from which these expressions are taken. Through him, as the representative and image of the Father, (Col. i. 15.) all the worship and obedience which we owe the Father, is to be offered up. chap. xiii. 15. He is the hope set before us, to which we have fled for refuge to lay hold; the anchor of our souls, sure and steadfast, within the veil; the forerunner for us entered, by whom our interest in heaven is established, and our triumphant entrance into it secured, at his second coming, and the appearance of his glory. chap. vi. 18—20. and ix. 28.

(To be continued.)

Selections.

THE ANXIOUS ENQUIRY OF THE AWAKENING SINNER.

A SERMON,

By the Rev. A. Bruce, late minister of the gospel, Whitburn,
Scotland.

Acts xvi. 29, 30

(Continued from our last.)

IMPROVEMENT.

From what has been said on this subject, and from the information afforded at large in the scriptures, persons may be en-

abled to form some judgment about any serious concern, or conviction of sin and spiritual danger, of which they may have had experience. It is hardly to be supposed that persons come to years of reflection, especially when living under the word, can have been altogether strangers to something of this kind, in a greater or lesser degree : and those that have been at ease from their youth, and never have been awakened to thoughtfulness, nor felt serious impressions on these subjects, must still be in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. But these may prevail and may prevail, as we have seen, in a very great degree, and yet their spiritual condition not be changed to the better, and they also in the end may perish in their sins. Every one therefore should consider, whether his concern or exercise has been of a right kind,—what course he has been made to take under it, and what effect it has produced, or is likely to produce.

It ought to be considered, whether convictions arise merely from some natural light in the mind, from the influence of religious education, and from the nature of some sins, that at first, or when recently committed, can hardly fail to alarm and disquiet conscience, not altogether hardened, from their being base, discreditable, exposing them to shame, and injurious to their interest; or if they come by the word, and be evidently impressed by the hand of God, as an arrow shot by the unerring aim and force of the Spirit, which they could not evade, fly from, or withstand.

Whether hereby a discovery has been got of sin in a just light, as exceeding sinful, as most odious in itself, as well as dangerous, as done in the sight of God and dishonouring to him,—against the love and grace of the Redeemer, and the voice and strivings of the Spirit in the gospel.

Whether a view has been got of sin, as in genuine and thorough conviction, as deeply rooted in a corrupt nature, and springing from the overflowing and impure fountain of the wicked heart. Whether persons have been gradually led to perceive an unsearchable abyss of evil in themselves, a small part of which only had broken forth in view of others, or been disclosed to their own eyes. Whether their convictions have been suddenly suppressed, and unseasonably stifled as in birth, or if they have had a free course, leading them to a continued and more narrow search into their hearts and lives, that they might see still more and greater abominations; until they be deeply affected, humbled to the dust, melted to contrition, made to abhor themselves, and to cry out, ' Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer?—Woe is me ! for I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a peo-

ple of unclean lips : for mine eyes have seen the king the Lord of hosts.'

Genuine concern and salutary conviction will not be pent up only in the thoughts, or inwardly die away in silence. The secret uneasiness must find a vent, and work out. It will open the mouth in free confession to God, to disburden the overcharged soul, whose pain is increased by refraining speech; it will make it diligently enquire 'how it may ease its smart;'—it will put it in motion, drive it to duties,—vent itself in prayer and earnest cries, and sometimes in a flood of tears. Thus David describes the state of his mind, and the course he was made to take; 'When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long; for day and night thine hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Ps. xxxii. 3, 4, 5. In the day of my trouble, I sought the lord; my sore ran in the night, and ceased not; my soul refused to be comforted; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed:—I cried unto God with my voice, &c. Ps. lxxvii. 1, 2, 3.

As it will bring them to commune with their own hearts, and to open their mouths to God, so also to express their concern, or to confess to men; to ask the way, and converse with those who fear him, about religious subjects; even those who were wont studiously to avoid such company, and were shy and dumb as to such conversations; who perhaps never before spoke a word about Christ, salvation, and eternity.

The person who is truly awakened to enquire after salvation will not be easily satisfied, or lulled asleep again. His convictions will not pass, and be rendered abortive, as they are in many, in the manner, and by the means above described. The wound that has been made will not be slightly covered over and healed. He will not listen to every word, or be satisfied with every answer. A great anxiety is produced, accompanied with a fearful jealousy lest he should miscarry. The very thoughts of this, in a matter so important, makes his very heart to tremble. When he thinks of such words as these, 'There are few that be saved—Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to life;—many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able:' Those to whom a promise was given of entering into God's rest, 'did come short of it:' 'It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away to renew them

again to repentance: he is struck with apprehension, and is jealous over himself,—lest he should be such a person:—lest he should miss or lose the way, and hereby lose his soul. He finds himself perishing, and must have a firm hold to support him: he finds his standing to be insecure, he must seek for a more sure ground of peace and hope. Upon farther light and more strict search, he already sees that his first thoughts and attempts were altogether wrong; that he was about to build on a foundation of sand, to hide himself under an insufficient covering from the awful storm, ‘a refuge of lies’ which would be swept away, when judgment should be laid to the line; and that his own righteousness, which is of the law, is utterly unprofitable. He cannot therefore be at rest till he find firm footing, on an immoveable rock, and reach the true hiding place from the tempest.

The soul that is under due concern about salvation, can only be relieved from its anxious fear by a divine word, for which it will wait, and ardently thirst; which it will gladly hear, and on which it will be brought to rely. As its fears were not excited by imaginary terrors, neither will they be dispelled by fanciful visions, unaccountable transports, or delusive dreams of peace. It can only be filled with true joy and peace in believing: and by the heavenly Comforter speaking and bringing consolation to the heart. He must know what and whom he believes, and that ‘he is able to keep the good thing that is committed to him’ against the final day.

The concern that is genuine is known by its lasting and permanent effects. It is not a transient page, that is over in a day or moment, and produces nothing. The sudden emotions of fear, or passing gusts of affection and joy, that may seize formalists, hypocrites, and stony-ground hearers, are like the bleak winds, or hurricanes, that blast the trees, and lay waste the fields; or like the spring tides that overflow the banks in the mean time, but abate again as fast as they rose, sink as low as before they were high, leaving the channel as dry and barren as ever. The alarm and seriousness of some are over, as soon as the outward occasion of them, be it some striking providence, or rousing word, is past: some, who perhaps could not contain their tears, or scarcely refrain from crying out in the midst of the assembly, have dropt their concern, and shaken off their fears, so soon as they have stepped over the porch of the church, or laid aside their holiday cloths; so that no trace, or fruit of them was afterwards to be discerned. ‘Like one beholding his natural face in a glass, they go away, and instantly forget what manner of persons they were.’ The convictions that thus pass off, and leave persons as insens-

ble, cold, and hardened, as void of life and motion, not to say profane, as ever, are not those that introduce or accompany salvation. But when we speak of the permanence of convictions, it is not meant, that either a remarkable degree of these, or the continuance of the more sensible and violent emotions when they take place, is essential to sound conviction, or necessary to genuine repentance. Like birth pains, the more gentle these are, and the shorter their continuance, it is so much much the more desirable; while without them there may be a safe delivery. Yet it is a necessary requisite and mark of such convictions, that they be of such a nature and duration as to accomplish their needful ends: that they not only should excite alarm, and earnest desires for deliverance, produce humiliation, and a disposition to receive it, but also make the person persist in his enquiry and pursuit after suitable relief, till he obtain some view, and even the possession of it: not only so, but after this is attained, they should remain, producing a lasting remembrance of his former state, holy caution, humble walking with God accompanied with gratitude, a habitual godly sorrow, and the exercise of evangelical repentance. Thus the royal penitent said, 'My sin I ever see;'—Hezekiah, after his sore mourning, and recovery to health and peace, said, 'I will go in the bitterness of my soul all the days of my life.' Thus also the church, in her lamentations, reflected on the deep distress to which she had been reduced; 'Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to mind, therefore have I hope, It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not,' Lam. iii. 19. The apostle of the Gentiles reminded them of what they had formerly been, and enjoins them to remember it, and the happy change that had succeeded,—that 'at that time they were without God, without Christ, and without hope.' He himself often recollected and mentioned the memorable day and circumstances of his own conversion, with sentiments of self-condemnation and regret, joined with renewed acknowledgments of the distinguished grace of God bestowed upon him; but still accounting himself to be the least of all saints.

Farther, under suitable concern, and divine direction, persons will always be made to regard and carefully use the means that are appointed of God, and usually employed by him, both in converting and advancing them in holiness and comfort unto salvation. Any impulses or pretensions to extraordinary devotion, that dispose men to neglect or depreciate these, may be justly ac-

counted delusive. God has connected the end and means together, both in the natural and spiritual world; and though he be not restricted to these, yet he usually employs them in his operations; and though they cannot, independent of his influence and concurrence, contribute to the end, by any intrinsic virtue or fitness in them, more especially when the end is supernatural, yet, when he has made it the duty of men to use them, and gives them opportunity to do so, it would be presumption in them to expect the one without the other; as Paul said to the master of the ship, when suffering shipwreck, 'Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.' When salvation is to be attained, when it is certainly predestined, and promised, it is only to be enjoyed in the order prescribed, and in the manner in which it is promised. Supernatural operations on the minds of men, connected with eternal salvation, determine the subjects of them, both to suitable internal and external acts, as their necessary effects, and as an evidence of their being real and truly divine. In conversion the whole man is made active; and when the heart is turned to God, the outward conduct and course of life manifest the change: attention to known duties, and eagerness and diligence in running in the way of his commandments, ensue. They work together with God, when 'he worketh in them to will and to do.' And they now perform every act of duty, reading, hearing, praying, &c., in a different manner from what they ever did before: and they endeavour 'to shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end;' though they are denied to duties, and rest not in means, knowing that 'it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy.'

In fine, the concern that is accompanied with conversion, is not of a selfish nature, but is attended with a public and generous spirit. Though it is at first chiefly and more immediately occupied about personal salvation, yet it does not terminate there; but works by disinterested love to God and man. Conscious of the dishonour he had done to God for so long a time, the true convert will have an ardent desire to glorify him, and to employ that life he has bestowed in his service: when he thinks on the horrible pit from which he has been taken, and the pains of hell from which he has been delivered, his language will be, 'O what shall I render to the Lord for such goodness, and for all his benefits to me?' With the hope and joy of salvation in his heart, the new song of praise will be in his mouth, to magnify the Lord; desirous that many may see it, and rely upon him also. That Redeemer, whom in unbelief he had rejected, and in ignorance blasphemed, and to whom he is indebted for all his salvation, he

cannot but honour, love, adore, and serve, to the utmost of his power; determining henceforth 'not to live to himself, but to him who died and rose again.' His interest, that formerly he had treated with indifference, or openly opposed, he will now be zealous to promote: as Paul instantly after his eyes were opened, began boldly to speak in the name of Jesus, and zealously to preach that gospel which lately he had persecuted. 'When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me,' says he, 'I consulted not with flesh and blood; but went up to Jerusalem.' The injuries that before he had done to any man, he will be anxious so far as in his power to repair, by acknowledgment and benevolence, a recompence of kindness and benefits, especially, the offences that may have been given, or the injuries done to the members or servants of Christ, in any manner, will not only be desisted from, but penitently bewailed, and repaid by love and kind offices; by a readiness to minister charitably to them in their wants, their labours, or sufferings, or cheerfully to labour, or to suffer with them. What a deep and heart-rending note of sorrow, is that uttered by the same Saul of Tarsus, in his confession to the Lord, and before his church, when he became another man; 'And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also stood by;—stood by, consenting to his death, feeding his cruel eyes, and gratifying his malignant spirit, with the spectacle. He had 'made havoc of the church, hauling men and women unto prisons, and persecuting them unto strange cities:' but soon he joined himself to them, spent his life in doing them service; in sufferings and in labours more abundant: often was he scourged, often hauled to prison: Stephen was arraigned, stoned and died but once, but Paul was often accused, thrice was he stoned, and at one of these times, was carried forth of the city as dead; yea, he was in deaths often, enduring a continual martyrdom, 'dying daily,' as he protested to the Corinthians, before his martyrdom at Rome; where he was willingly 'offered on the service and sacrifice of the faith' of the Gentile converts, many of whom had been begotten to Christ through his ministry. This jail-keeper at Philippi, after he had got his own mind somewhat composed, by hearing the word of salvation, discovered a similar disposition, in his narrow sphere, and according to his ability to make some amends for the wrongs he had done, by performing a work and labour of love for the sake of Christ's name, in ministering without delay to the saints that had been so unworthily used. His heart had no doubt smitten him for having been art and part in the guilt of the prosecutors and judges of these just men, in whose favour God had not only loosed their fetters, but also those

of all their fellow prisoners ; therefore, regardless of the resentment or punishment he might procure to himself for such acts of kindness, ' He took them that same hour of the night and washed their stripes ; and when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them ;' and after the word of the Lord had been spoken to him and all his house, ' he was baptised, he and all his straightway.' This is given as an unfailing test of unfeigned religion before God and the Father ; and as such will not be forgotten to be produced in evidence, at the last day ; ' I was an hungered,' the Son of man will say to them on his right hand, ' and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.' Then shall they say, ' Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee ?—When saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ? And the King shall answer, Verily, inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' In one word, when any have a sincere regard for the salvation of their own souls, or have obtained an interest in that which the gospel brings, they cannot but commiserate the condition of perishing sinners, earnestly desire their conversion, and to contribute what they can to promote their spiritual welfare and final salvation. This is the highest kind of charity, and that in which the greatest benevolence to fellow-men is discovered. And those who are impressed with the worth of souls, the ruin to which they are exposed, who have known experimentally the terrors of the Lord, and the unspeakable value of salvation,—who have themselves been plucked as brands out of the burning, are the persons who are most capable of feeling for others, and best fitted for performing or furthering such a service of love, ' to save them with fear, plucking them out of the fire ;' and such cannot be totally destitute of every degree of this charity, however faintly the flame may sometimes burn, and however they may fail in vigorous exertions, and in the proper acts which manifest it. If they have found the Saviour, they must be desirous that many may participate with them in the happiness they now enjoy ; as the woman of Samaria invited her fellow-citizens to come and see him, and hear him also ; and as some of the first disciples who were called, upon meeting with their brethren and acquaintances, imparted to them the great discovery, and brought them to Jesus. Is there any Christian but would wish that all in his house, all in his neighbourhood, all in the nation where he dwells, all his enemies as well as his friends, and, were it the will of God, that all in every nation under heaven, might obtain

salvation ? What care did Abraham, Joshua, Cornelius, and the jailor, show about the religious instruction of their children and domestics, that they, together with themselves, might have an interest in the blessing of the covenants of promise ? What benevolence did Paul express in his reply to Agrippa, when he said, ' I would to God that not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were not only almost but altogether such as I am, except these bonds ? How unweariedly did he traverse the world, that he might gain souls to Christ, and ' turn them from the power of Satan unto God ?' He travailed as in birth till Christ was formed in the hearts of those to whom he preached the gospel. How great was his solicitude, in particular, for the conversion and salvation of his kinsmen according to the flesh, who were Israelites ; and what great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart had he, on account of their continued unbelief and hardness ? And ' his heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel was, that they might be saved.' All are not apostles ; all are not ministers of the gospel, the special end of which is the salvation of souls ; nor need any leave their ordinary employments to commence preachers without a proper call, in order to show this compassion, and to promote this great design. Christians in every station may, in various ways, contribute to it, and thus become fellow labourers with apostles, and even workers together with God, and share in the honour and joy of being instrumental saviours. Some who are not gained by the word, an apostle supposes, ' may without the word be won by the conversation of their godly wives : ' 1 Pet. iii. 1. ' What knowest thou, O wife,' said another apostle, ' whether thou shalt save thy husband ? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife ? But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk, and so ordain I in all churches.' chap. v. 19, 20. ' Brethren,' said James, ' If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.'

A few words of EXHORTATION shall conclude this discourse.
(*Exhortation in our next.*)

AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST ARMINIANISM.

[*Continued from page 257.*]

The second property of the divine decree of predestination; it is UNCHANGEABLE.

Hence it is compared to *mountains of brass*, Zech. vi. 1,* and it is called *the immutability of his counsel*, Heb. vi. 17. This is made evident by sundry reasons, as

1. The divine decree hath an unchangeable *fountain*, to wit, the unchangeableness of God. He is of one mind and who can turn him? Job xxxiii. 13. He desires, and he doth it; there is no created being can interpose between the desire and the doing, to hinder their meeting together. God is not a man, that he should lie, or the son of man that he should repent. Numb. xxiii. 19. I am the *Lord*, I change not. Mal. iii. 6. With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. James i. 17. The counsel of The Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Psalm xxxiii. 11. There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord that shall stand. Prov. xix. 21. Man is a poor changeable creature, and changes his *mind* oftener than his *garment*, both from the darkness of his understanding and the perverseness of his will: He sees something, that he saw not before; but there is no such imperfection in God, all things are naked before him, dissected, or with their faces *upward*. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked, and opened, unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Heb. iv. 13. He knows all his works (their natures and circumstances) as perfectly in the *beginning* of the world, as he will do at the end thereof. *And he abides still in one mind when his dispensations are changed, for he decreed the change of them from all eternity.*

2. The decree of election stands upon an unchangeable foundation, to wit, that rock of ages, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 8. As the first Adam was the foundation stone in the decree of Creation; so the second Adam, even Jesus, is the foundation stone in the decree of election. God hath *blessed* us, in him, yea, and we shall be blessed; he hath *chosen* us, in him; *pardoned* us, in him; *sealed* us, in him; *built us up* and *completed* us in him. According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. 2 Tim. i. 9. All those acts of grace are said to be *in* Christ. Who hath *blessed* us—in Christ. Eph. i. 3. *Chosen* us—in him, ver. 4. *pardoned* us—in whom we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, ver. 7. *in* whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed, ver. 13. rooted and built up—in him. Col.

* Zech. vi. 1. "By the brazen mountains are ment the eternal counsel and providence of God; whereby he hath from before all eternity, decreed what shall come to pass, and that which neither Satan nor all the world can alter." Beza.

ii. 7. and ye are complete—in him, ver. 10. Indeed Christ himself was under divine ordination; he verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world. 1 Peter i. 20, and is called the *elect stone*. 1 Peter ii. 6. Christ is the first person elected. Behold my servant whom I have chosen, mine elect, &c. Isa. xlii. 1. Mat. xii. 18. Christ was chosen as the head, and we as his members; therefore are we said to be given to Christ—Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, John xvii. 6. Now so long as this foundation standeth sure, so long doth the superstructure remain unchangeable. The Temple stood firmly upon those two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, *i. e.* stability and strength; so the decree of election stands sure upon Christ the foundation; and none can pluck an elect soul from off this foundation. None can pluck any of *Christ's* out of his hands. Christ will loose none that are given to him; he will fulfil his Father's will, by taking care of them all. And this is the Father's will, which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should *lose nothing*, but should raise it up again at the last day. John vi. 39. They shall never perish. John x. 28.

3. It is *unchangeable*, because it is a decree written in heaven; and so above the reach of either angry men or enraged devils to cancel. The Lord knoweth them that are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19, they are the assembly and church of the first-born, written in heaven, Heb. xii. 23. Thence it is called the Lambs' book of life, which contains a *Catalogue* of the elect, determined by the unalterable counsel of God; which number can neither be *increased* nor *diminished*. This is to be rejoiced in above dominion over devils, rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven, Luke x. 20, which if our names may be written in heaven *to-day*, blotted out *to-morrow*, would be no such ground of joy. If the decree of the Medes and Persians, which were but earthly writings, were unalterable, (Dan. vi. 8.) how much more the decrees of the great God, written in heaven must be unchangeable. Must Pilate say, what I have written, I have written, John xix. 22. that is to say, "my writing shall not be altered," and shall not God says so, much more? *I know* (saith Solomon) that what God doth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it, Eccles. iii. 14. My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it, Isa. xli. 10, 11. The Sun may sooner be stopped in his course, than God hindered of his *work*, or in his *will*. Nature, Angels, Devils, Men, *all* may be resisted, and so miss of their design: not so God: for, who hath resisted his will? All those chariots of human occur-

rences and dispensations, come forth from between those mountains of brass, the unalterable decrees of God; vi. 1. and should it be granted that *one* soul may be blotted out of this book of life (this writing in heaven) then it is possible that *all* may be so; and, by consequence, it may be supposed, that, *that* book may become *empty*, and useless as waste paper; and that Christ may be a Head without a body.

4. It is *unchangeable*, for the decree concerning the *end* includes the *means* to that end; and binds them altogether with an irrefragable chain, which can never be broken. The predestinated, called, justified, glorified ones, are *the same*, Rom. viii. 30. Therefore the purpose of God concerning election *must* stand, Rom. ix. 11. God doth not decree the end without the means, nor the means without the end, but, *both together*. As a purpose for *building*, includes the hewing of stone, and squaring of timber, and all other materials for building work: And as a decree for *war*, implies arms, horses, ammunition, and all warlike provisions: So here, all that are elected to salvation, are elected to *sanctification* also. God *ordains* to the means, as well as to the end. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed, Acts xiii. 48. God hath ordained that we should walk in *good works*, Eph. ii. 10. We are elected unto *obedience*, through the sanctification of the Spirit, 1 Peter i. 2, therefore God hath promised to *sanctify* those whom he purposed to *save*. We teach with *Augustine*, that, "Election is an ordaining to *grace* as well as to *glory*." In predestination therefore, the *means* of salvation are no less absolutely decreed, than salvation itself. We may not conceive, that God's decree runs after this form. I will predestinate Peter to salvation, if it should happen so that he doth believe and persevere: But rather thus, I do predestinate Peter to salvation, which that he may infallibly obtain, I will *give* him both faith and perseverance. Were it otherwise, the foundation would not stand sure; yea, and God's gifts would not be without repentance, if God did not absolutely decree to give and bestow faith and perseverance to his elected ones. The covenant of grace, runs in this tenure, I will be a God to you, and ye shall be a people unto me; that is, I will make ye so.

From what has been observed, we may infer.

1. A name written in heaven, where no thief, no rust, no moth, comes to destroy it, is better than to be enrolled in princely courts; it is a name better than of sons and daughters, to be a free citizen of heaven.

2. Though we are changeable creatures, yet unchangeable love is towards us, that keeps *faster* hold of us, than we of it.

3. It is infinite condescension, that the great God should hold a poor lump of clay so fast in his almighty hands, as to secure our interest to all eternity!! John x. 28, 29. 1 Peter i. 4, 5.

The *third* property of the divine decree; it is *absolute*.

It is *absolute* in respect of the efficient, impulsive *cause* which the following reasons evince.

1. If the divine decree by *eternal*, it must be *absolute*; for nothing can be assigned before an eternal act, as the efficient cause thereof. There cannot be a *cause* of the will of God, out of God. Predestination is an immanent act of the divine will; and so, not only the cause, but also, the *first-cause*, of all created Beings; and therefore cannot (in any good sense) be said to depend on *foreseen* transient acts in the creature; so, by consequence, must be an *absolute* act: unless we will make the volitions of God to come *behind* the created and temporary volitions of man; which is grossly absurd. This goes to a denial of God being the first cause of all things.

2. If God be *God*; if he be an Almighty, All-wise, All-free, and an all-disposing God; then his decree of election must be an absolute decree; for a conditional decree, makes a conditional God, and plainly *ungods* him, by ascribing such imperfections to him as are unworthy his majesty, and below his divine being: as, *first* it opposes his *omnipotence*; if some conditions be antecedent to the *will* of God, then the same are antecedent also to the *power* of God. *Second*, it opposes the *wisdom* of God, in ordering all things; for if Peter must be willing to believe, *before* God's decree concerning Peter, then divine wisdom doth not determine concerning the *order* of things. *Thirdly*, it takes away the glory of God's absolute liberty and independence; for if Peter's believing, and Judas' not believing, be antecedent to the decree of God concerning them, then God hath not an absolute dominion over his own creatures; and the potter hath not freedom to make *this* lump of clay a vessel of honor, and *that* a vessel of dishonor; and this difference will arise more from the quality of the clay than the will of the potter, and God's will must be *dependent* on the will of man for its determinations. This plainly overthrows the independency of God. *Fourthly*, it opposes, and takes away the glory of his all-disposing providence; if the decree be not absolute, how can God be said wholly to dispose of Lots that are cast into the lap, as in Prov. xvi. 33? Shall we say that the lot of the Apostleship fell to Matthias by *chance*? Acts i. 26, was it not rather absolutely ordained and ordered by the Lord; to whom the Apostles prayed, as in verse 24, saying, Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether [or

which] of these two thou hast chosen. And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias. Thus by the disposal of lots in the lap, was Achan discovered to be Israel's curse, and Saul appointed to be Israel's King, Jos. vii. 14—18. I Sam. x. 19—21. Man purposeth, but God disposeth; because God by an absolute decree hath fore-ordained all things that do come to pass. They fall not out casually, and beyond God's intention; thus it is said, it behoved Christ to suffer. Luke xxiv. 46.

3. If the will of the Potter, be an absolute will over his pots; much more is the will of God an absolute will over mankind. It is God's own comparison. Rom. ix. 20, 21. God compares not himself to a goldsmith, because a goldsmith hath costly materials, such as *silver* and *gold*, which lays some obligation on him to make honorable vessels therewith. But he compareth himself to a potter, because, 1st. The materials of a potter are vile and sordid, so more answerable to fallen mankind, out of which God maketh his choice. We are not only clay, Job iv. 19. but sinful clay, through the fall. 2d. The potter doth not make this difference among his pots for any foreseen inherent goodness in his clay, (for the whole lump before him is of an equal temper and quality) but from the pleasure of his own will. Thus the potter's power over his materials, is clearer from exception than that of the goldsmiths and more illustrates the *absoluteness* of God's will in his choice, both of vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. Again, the distance between the clay and the potter, is but a *finite* distance; even the distance only between one creature and another creature, *animate* and *inanimate*: But the distance between God and mankind is *infinite*; not only the *natural* distance between God and us, as we are *creatures*; but also, the *moral* distance between God and us, as we are *sinners*. The potter also must have his clay made to his hand; he cannot make his own clay, though he temper it for his work, when he hath *found* it. But the great God creates his own clay. He created the earth out of which man was formed; in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Gen. i. 1. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground. Gen. ii. 7. It follows then, if the potter, by an absolute will, dispose of his pots; much more God.

Inference drawn from the preceding.

1. If the absolute will of God, be the universal cause of all things, then no event can fall beyond or beside God's will: and *fortune* (in the world's sense thereof) is but the Devil's blasphemous *spit* upon divine providence.

2. God's absolute will cannot be resisted; as he hath willed, so

shall it come to pass; and there is no hindering the execution thereof. The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand. Isaiah, xiv. 24. Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased. Psalm, cxv. 3. I know that thou canst do every thing. Job, xlii. 2.

3. Then learn we submission to the will of God. Proud, yet brittle clay, will be knocking their sides against the absolute will of God, till they break in pieces: So did Adonijah, when Solomon must rule; compare 1 Kings i. 5. with 1 Chron. xxii. 9. and mark the end thereof, 1 Kings ii. 23—25. O for the grace of humility to enable us to adopt the language of the prophet, "Now O Lord, thou art our father: we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we all are the work of thine hand. Isa. lxiv. 8.

[Remainder in our next.]

FROM THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

ON THE IMPRECATIONS IN THE PSALMS.

The book of psalms is an important part of scripture. It has been a directory to the internal exercise of the saints in every age since it was composed, and they have always delighted to express their religious feelings in its language. Besides this, it is a form to be observed in the solemn exercise of praise, both private and public. On these accounts, it is of consequence that persons have distinct views of the meaning and scope of the psalms, and of the manner in which their minds should be exercised in using them.

The chief difficulty which has been felt, lies in the imprecations which several of the psalms contain. It is objected, That there occurs frequently in them strong and reiterated prayers for divine vengeance upon the enemies of the psalmist, which seem to indicate a spirit very different from that which the gospel of Christ is calculated to cherish, and which the law inculcates. Before answering this objection, it may be remarked, that if the spirit which breathes in these psalms be inconsistent with the law of Christ, then it is inconsistent with the law of Moses. "The law of the Lord," in the days of the psalmist, was "perfect," Psal. xix. 7. The Israelites were commanded to do good to their enemies, Exod. xxiii. 4. 5. And David rewarded evil with good, Psal. vii. 4. No person who is acquainted with his Bible, and who entertains a due reverence for it, will say that these imprecations proceeded from David's own spirit when provoked by the persecution of his enemies. The book of Psalms is recognized by Christ as a constituent part of inspired scripture, and he expressly says, that David spake by the Spirit, Luke, xxiv.

44. Matth. xxii. 43. Nay, what is decisive on this point is, the two psalms which are commonly referred to as containing the severest imprecations, (the 69th and 109th), are said by the apostle Peter to have been spoken by the Holy Ghost, Acts, i. 16. 20. "Men and brethren, the scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas. For it is written in the book of Psalms, "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein;" and, "His bishopric let another take." Compare Psal. lxix. 25. cxi. 8. It may also be remarked, that if these passages in the Psalms are to be condemned as proceeding from a bitter and vindictive spirit, then upon the same principles the condemnation must be extended to different passages in the New Testament, such as the imprecations of Paul upon Elymas the sorcerer, and Alexander the coppersmith, Acts, xiii. 10. 11. 2 Tim. iv. 14. And the exercise of the church, as recorded in Rev. vi. 10. xi. 17. 18. xvi. 5.—7. xviii. 20. xix. 1. 2.

Thus it appears that the opinion of those who regard these passages in the Psalms as breathing (what they call) an Old-Testament spirit, inconsistent with that of the gospel, is untenable and dangerous. But it will be asked, In what light are we to consider these imprecations?

The answer is, They are to be considered as *prophetical* denunciations of punishment upon the incorrigible impenitent enemies of God and his Anointed. They are not to be viewed as expressive of the private wishes of the psalmist, but of the judgments denounced by the Holy Spirit against the implacable enemies of God. This view of these imprecations is given by several commentators on the Psalms, and it may serve to direct persons in singing them. At the same time, in the exercise, there is an adoration of, and acquiescence in, the righteous judgments of God denounced in them.

It is further to be observed here, that several of the psalms, particularly the 69th and 109th, bear a prophetical reference to Christ and his enemies. By this it is not merely meant that what is contained in them may be applied to illustrate what happened to Christ, but that the Spirit intended directly to describe and predict these events. Thus Christ says, that in the treachery of Judas "the scripture was fulfilled," Psal. xli. 9. He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me," John, xiii. 18. And the fearful judgments denounced in Psal. 69th and 109th, are said to have been spoken before by the Holy Ghost concerning Judas, Acts, i. 16. The consideration that our Lord himself is the speaker in these psalms, should dispose us to regard them with the

greatest reverence, and to beware of putting harsh constructions upon their language or spirit.

Nor are these denunciations inconsistent with the gentleness of Christ, and the prayers which he offered up in behalf of his enemies. But on this delicate point, instead of hazarding any thing of my own, I beg leave to make use of the language of a foreign divine, the celebrated WIRSIUS, who, in my opinion, has in a few sentences set this subject in a true light. I shall translate the passage for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the original.

“Neither is it so difficult to reconcile these tremendous imprecations with the gentleness discovered by Christ in the rest of his conduct. Incredible, indeed, was the benignity of Christ, even towards the wicked and his personal enemies, in an especial manner to those whom he knew to be given him by his Father in the eternal decree of election, and who were to be brought to him by the efficacy of his Spirit: For them he interceded that they might be freed from their sins by the merit of his cross, and made partakers of his grace and salvation. Among those who crucified him there were some who were converted to the faith by his intercession and the preaching of Peter. But I add further, that as Christ dwelt among men, subject to the law of love, he loved all men promiscuously as his neighbour; with a tender and pious affection, he desired their salvation, shed tears of pity over those who perished, and thus left to his followers a most perfect example of gentleness. But, notwithstanding this, the same Christ knew with what just indignation his heavenly Father was filled against the perverse despisers of his grace, those rebels and enemies who would not submit to his reign; he knew what dreadful punishments were appointed for them, and how useful and necessary these were for the illustration of the divine glory, and the protection and enlargement of his church. To this will of his heavenly Father he consented, and subscribed, as equitable, just, and holy; and he accommodated his prayers unto it, that the will of God might be accomplished upon the irreconcilable enemies of his own and his Father’s Majesty. What is there in all this which is not godly and holy, and becoming Christ as the Son of God, who always wills the same things with his Father? What is contained in these imprecations which God does not elsewhere declare that he will execute upon the stubbornly wicked? What gentleness will forbid those prayers to Christ, by which the glory of faithfulness and justice is ascribed to God? And what shall hinder David, as a figure of Christ, and as filled with the spirit of Christ, from pronouncing those threatenings, not against this or the other

adversary of his own, but against the rebellious and impenitent enemies of God and Christ ? If I am asked, With what sentiments I sing those and similar psalms ? I candidly answer, Not indeed in the way of imprecating all these evils upon these whom I now consider as persecutors of the truth, (for seeing I do not know what God hath decreed concerning these persons, I choose rather to intercede, and fervently to intercede, for their conversion and salvation,) but I sing them with a mind which while it dreads and trembles at the severity of divine judgment, and the future calamity of the wicked, at the same time loves and praises the justice of God ; as the blessed in heaven do.*”

OMICRON.

THE QUAKERS, OR SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

OUR readers are doubtless generally acquainted with the fact, that this sect has split into two parties and separated. This event was caused by about one-fourth, some say one-half, of the society having taken offence or become alarmed, at the sentiments of one of their celebrated preachers, *Elias Hicks*. Hick's sentiments are highly blasphemous, more superstitious, and consequently more pernicious than even Deism. Those of his opponents, though in some respects nearer the gospel of our Lord, are still so wide of the mark, as scarce to deserve the name of Christianity. Both of these contending parties claim to be the genuine followers of the ancient Friends. The able editor of the *Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church*, the Rev. Dr. *Brownlee*, to whom the public are indebted for much valuable information respecting the Quakers, by the publication of his *History of that people*, has shown conclusively that the *Hicksites* are the true Quakers. We subjoin the following extract from his October number :

“ *Of the Resurrection from the dead.*—The doctrine of the Resurrection from the dead is peculiar to the gospel, and one of its fundamental articles. To believe it, is a peculiar badge of the Christian; to deny it is to be guilty of error†. In respect of the body that shall be raised, all admit that it will not partake of the gross nature and qualities with which it is laid in the grave. On this article all the churches of Christ have declared out of the holy scriptures, their belief as follows:—That the body shall undergo such a process of purification, that its earthly and gross

* *Miscellanea Sacra*, tom. i. lib. i. cap. 18. and 24.

† *Matth.* xxii. 29. *2 Tim.* ii. 18.

qualities shall be entirely removed; that its corruption shall be changed into incorruption; its dishonour into glory; its weakness into power; its natural body into a spiritual body; its mortality into immortality; that, nevertheless, this change in its qualities shall not destroy its essential qualities and nature; that it shall still be the identical body which lived here, and in which the soul resided; that the holy scriptures do teach distinctly that those, "*who are in their graves shall come forth; and the many who sleep in the dust shall awake;*" that it was the identical body of our Lord which was raised from the grave, and "*he rose as the first fruits of them that sleep;*" that if the same body is not raised it will not be a resurrection but a creation of new bodies; that if the same body be not raised, the body which was bought by the blood of our Lord, and sanctified by the blessed Spirit, and was the instrument by which his good works were performed, shall be lost in the dust, and consumed by the last flames; and another body shall receive the honours and the reward of the Redeemer's purchase though he is not its Saviour, and it can never join in the song of the redeemed in bliss as it was not "*redeemed by his blood;*" that if the same body is not raised, men do not *receive the things in the body** according to what he has done in this life, although inspiration has declared it; that if the same body be not raised, the bodies of the wicked, the very instruments of sin, shall escape vengeance and sleep in the dust; and in the "*resurrection of damnation*" they shall have other bodies which never were stained by sin, and never partook of guilt, and which it were injustice to subject to punishment.

The sentiments of the Society are perfectly at one with those of their masters. "*The body is the prison of the soul,*" said the Platonic divines: "*Death is the escape of the soul from it: never again shall it be confined in it. The soul after death, is joined to its aeriform body, and returns into the essence of that Being out of which it was taken.*"†

The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, held by the Society,‡ is, therefore, radically different from that of the Bible.

On this subject there have existed two opinions in the society. *First:* Those whose system has been rigorously consistent with that of their masters, have confined their doctrine on this article exclusively to the mystic resurrection within them.§. These, as

* 2 Cor. v. 10. The word *done* is an addition of the translator in this text.

† Cicero. De Divin. et consol. oper. p. 446. Plat. in his Timæus. Taylor's Platonic Phil. vol. ii. p. 218, and 235, quarto.

‡ Penn vol. 2. p. 896.

§ Fox, and those of the "*first convincement,*" Great Myst. p. 214, &c.

the zealous disciples of Hymeneus and Philetus,* to whom the venerable Paul paid such marked attention,† have taught that "*the resurrection is past already.*"

Second: In the close of the seventeenth century, the leaders of the Society being driven to the last resort by the polemics of the day, came out with an avowal of a resurrection "*from the grave.*" But the value of the concession was hardly appreciated, when, to the astonishment of the religious world, they again came out against the resurrection of the same body that was laid in the grave. Here is something marvellous. Here is a raising out of the grave, and yet not of the body that is in the grave. But the persevering Penn, ever undaunted in the hour of fighting, stood out against the shafts of irony, and satire, and argument. He threw his gauntlet down with this challenge: Your resurrection "*is a conceit that agrees better with the Alcoran than with the gospel.*"‡ *The absurdity,*" says he, "*of the Popish transubstantiation is rather out-done than equalled by this fleshly resurrection.*"§ Great spirits are never content with moderate measures; and this often brings men of ancient times into contact with those of modern times. Hence by the same impulse of zeal, for it could not be a designed imitation, Penn renews the very dilemma by which the Sadducees thought to entangle our Lord. "*If they rise so,*" he is speaking of the "*same bodies,*" "*then every man is to rise married,*" et cetera.|| And that it may not be supposed that he disputes merely against the rising of the "*gross and natural body*"—a thing which no man advocates, he takes care to mark the very point against which his hostility is directed; it is against the "*identity and sameness of the body.*"¶

His favourite argument is "*that bodies compounded out of this elementary world cannot outlive their own matter ;*" and that *dust cannot be eternal.*" As if the Almighty cannot make matter as well as spirit eternal !

* 2 Tim. ii. ver. 17, 18.

† 1 Tim. i. 20.

‡ Penn. vol. ii. p. 896. What is the gospel in his opinion? The gospel is by Barclay actually put *within man*. And even the very *preachers*, whose "*feet,*" the apostles says, "*are beautiful on the mountains,*" and the "*two edged sword,*" and "*the fire and the hammer,*"—all, all are actually *within them*! Apol. Prop. v. and vi. sect. 23. Aye! "*and Moses and the prophets are within them.*" "*Fisher's Velata,*" p. 4. No wonder it is that a writer said of them "*they carry about with them consubstantiation in their bellies.*"

§ Penn, vol. ii. ch. 13, of his "*Railing against Reason.*" Against the Popish transubstantiation, or that the bread and wine in the holy supper are, in fact, changed into the very flesh and the very blood of Christ, we have the evidence of all our senses. But in the "*resurrection*" there is nothing contrary to reason, or the senses, or experience.

|| Vol. ii. 545, compare this *modern* with the ancient Sadducee. Matth. xx. 28.

¶ Vol. ii. 544, also Tuke and Clarkson Portr. vol. 2, p. 229.

The second coming of Christ to judgment.—Whatever may be the modern sentiments of the society on this article, and they must have undergone, it is hoped, a material change, from the kindly interchange of sentiment in their civil intercourse with the christian world, it is certain that the primitive Friends denied the second coming of the Lord Jesus in human nature, to the last judgment.

Their system, in brief, seems to have been this; At death the body returns to its native dust, never again to leave it; the soul returns into the essence of that being out of which it came. Christ does not return to raise the dead, or separate the righteous from the wicked. Little is written by them to elucidate their sentiments on this subject; but that little is awfully decisive. Having admitted Christs first coming in *the flesh*, they maintain, with warmth that his second coming was in the effusion of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. "*These we acknowledge*," said G. Whitehead, "*but of no other do we read.*"* "*And those are like to be deceived who expect this personal coming of Christ.*"† And thus they placed themselves in the rank of the bold spirits of St. Peter's time, who demanded "*where is the promise of his coming.*"‡

Lastly;—*Of the Future State.*—The sentiments of the society in general, respecting the future state, have not been exactly ascertained. Their chief writers speak in general terms, and avoid minute discussion on this topic. This much, however, is certain, that Burroughs, one of their *inspirati*, uttered in his last moments, this memorable Platonic sentiment, to which I have alluded before.—"*Now my soul and spirit is centered into its own being with God, and this form of person must return from whence it came.*"§ And Fox has left these words on record, "*that none has a glory and a heaven but within them.*"||

Sic itur—sed non ad astra.

Let these views of the ancient Friends be contrasted with the sentiments of *Elias Hicks*, and his followers.

The following we copy from the '*Friend*,' a religious and literary journal published in Philadelphia, by Friends. It appears in the form of a letter from Ohio: and was inserted in the "*FRIEND*" of the 2d of last month; and was copied also in the "*PHILADELPHIAN*."

It will thence appear how strikingly the doctrines of the mod-

* See his "*Light Within*," p. 40. † See his "*Christ Ascended*," p. 23, and his "*Nature of Christ*," p. 29, and Fuller's "*Reply to 12 Queries*," p. 81. ‡ 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

§ Howgills testim. prefixed to the Works of Burrough's folio. A. D. 1673.

|| Great Myst. p. 214, old edit. See Bugg's Pict. of Quack, p. 399, &c. &c.

ern mysticism and unitarianism, homologate with those of the age of Fox and Penn.

"We have heard a great deal said in our land (Ohio) about Elias Hicks' doctrine, but we have heard him for ourselves in several meetings of late; where he has come out plainer than I ever heard him before. At Purchase Quarter, he said, in speaking of Christ, that he never made a Christian, nor had he the power to do it, with much more to the same import; and the day following, 1st of 5th month at the public meeting, after Rowland Green, from Rhode Island, and Daniel Wood, from Indiana, had both spoken, and the latter very fully on the Divinity of Christ, quoting many scripture passages testifying that He was the true Messiah, our Redeemer, who died for us, and was now a mediator between us and our God, at which time there appeared to be great solemnity over the meeting. When he sat down, Elias Hicks arose, with saying, in accordance with the foregoing testimony, "he felt it his duty further to state, that there was but the only one true God, who created all things, and we were to look to no other; that man needed no mediator between him and his God, neither would it be acceptable to the All Wise Being, but a displeasure, that we should look to any other source but him alone, saying, there was a great deal said about *judgment after death, which was all an ignis fatuus, held out to terrify men, and cause them to bow to creeds and priestcraft.* For his part he knew of no purgatory after death, but he went to judgment every day, and so did every other man and woman, and that there was no other day of judgment; all the heaven and hell there was, is in us—we receive our rewards and punishments every day—our heaven and hell daily, and all he believed, we ever should. To prove it, said he, the drunkard would get his bottle and get drunk—this was his heaven—we saw him happy—he was then in heaven; and then he would, when he got sober, feel miserable: this was his hell, and if there was any heaven or hell hereafter, it was something we could know nothing about."

These are the doctrines of the Society as exhibited in their books lying before the public. What a contrast to the purity of the gospel!—How different from its spirit is the whole body of these doctrines; and the prospects held up by them to man pressing forward to his final destiny! On the one side the gospel exhibits the character of Deity in its true light; combining in the infinity of perfection, all that is magnificent and with all that is lovely and awful—"A just God and a Saviour." It exhibits the three distinct and divine persons, the Father, and the Son, and the Hol Ghost, in one undivided essence. It spreads before the

wandering and disconsolate sinner, the most cheering hopes from the atonement of Christ. It points out to man the fatal consequences of giving himself up to the guidance of his own heart, or of any principle within him; it woos him away from every false hope, and directs him to the exalted Saviour in heaven; it paints in proper colours the vanity of all sublunary objects; it supports the pilgrim when ready to sink in despair, under the pressure of human woes; it guides him through the mazes of folly, by the pure and steady light of truth; it leads him into the possession of all that is virtuous and lovely; it refreshes him from the living streams of salvation; it cheers his drooping spirit in the last fearful conflict; it lights up with holy joy, the countenance of the dying Christian, and throws its lovely beams of hope on the soul of the bending mourner as he conveys the dead to the silent tomb; it carries the soul of the sleeping pilgrim to the bright realms of glory, and thither it guarantees the certain ascension of the same body which he lays in the grave; there to reap the rich rewards of the divine love, in pure and perpetual bliss."

Miscellaneous.

PRICE OF BIBLES.

THE Rev. Mr. Patten of New-York, now travelling in Europe, makes the following statement in a speech delivered before the *London Religious Tract Society*, viz: "That in the year 1272, the pay of a labouring man was just three half pence per day. At the same period of time, the price of a Bible fairly written out was 30*lb.* sterling. If this statement be correct, the same amount of labour, that it required in England, in 1272, to purchase a *single* copy of the Bible, would now, in this country, purchase from *ten to twelve thousand* copies.

STATISTICAL TABLES.

IT is with pleasure we insert the following circular by the Synod's Clerk. For it has appeared to us absurd to publish those tables, when we knew they were not correct and had not the means for making them so. There has been some alterations made from time to time agreeable to such *unofficial* information as fell in our way. But there were barely *two* statistical tables accompanied the reports of Presbyteries to the last meeting of Synod; and they cannot of course be relied upon as a correct source of information unless *all* the Presbyteries send up corrected tables annually.

Mr. Editor—

Permit me, through the Monitor, to call the attention of our Presbyteries to the condition of our Statistical Tables. It is certainly of considerable importance that these Tables should exhibit a correct view of the state of our

churches, as far as they go. But if we are in quest of such a view, we will look for it in vain from the tables now published. Pastoral relations have been formed since these were framed, which are not recognised. Dissolutions of such relations have also taken place, which are not noticed. No correct estimate can be formed of the number of families and communicants in each pastoral charge. And, in addition to this, through the negligence of transcribers, or some similar cause, these tables are not what they once were; but in various instances places names and numbers over against each other, which have no connection—a collocation which presents a most erroneous view of several portions of our church. I would, therefore, respectfully request the several Presbyteries, belonging to the Synod, to accompany their reports, at the next meeting, with Statistical Tables prepared anew; and to adopt whatever preparatory measures are found necessary to have these prepared with as much accuracy and fulness as possible.

ANDREW HERON, *Synod Clerk.*

GOSPEL TRUTH

ACCURATELY STATED AND ILLUSTRATED.

Collected by John Brown, Minister of the Gospel, Whitburn Scotland.

THIS is the first American edition of a neat duodecimo volume of 375 pages, published by Andrew Munro, Esq. Canonsburgh, Pennsylvania. It comes highly recommended by five ministers belonging to the Associate Church, and four belonging to the Associate Reformed. We have read it with much interest, and think it to be in reality what its title imports, viz: an exhibition of many important points of *Gospel Truth*. And we can assure our readers that they would not repent the loss of the time and money it would cost them to procure and read it. The following extract from the Editor's preface will show the nature of its contents:

"The first part of the following work is employed in giving a brief history of the Controversy which was agitated in the Scottish Church, in the earliest part of last century, respecting certain points of theological doctrine, especially as stated in a treatise, entitled, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, a work which, though the Editor is not prepared to defend as faultless, he considers as of no common excellence, distinguishing with accuracy the things which differ, and pouring much light on many of the most important peculiarities of the evangelical system. In this brief sketch he has endeavoured, drawing his information from original documents, to give an account of the state of doctrine in the Scottish Church, previously to the agitation of the question respecting "the Marrow"—the circumstances in which the controversy originated—and the manner in which it was conducted on the part both of the General Assembly and the twelve Representatives, who were generally termed, *the Marrow Men*.

"In the second part of the book, the Editor has given short biographical notices of the Representatives, who were men equally distinguished by their clear views of divine truth, their personal religion, and their ministerial faithfulness. It appeared to him but an act of justice to these worthies to endeavour to rescue the memory of their names and virtues from oblivion, and by no means an useless piece of service to the Christian public, to present before them such patterns for their imitation. As several of their opponents were also learned and worthy men, where it was practicable, brief sketches of their lives and characters have also been given.

"The third part of the volume is occupied with extracts from the works of the Representatives, in illustration and defence of those views of evangelical truth which they had espoused. This forms perhaps the most valuable portion of the

book, and will probably be equally *new* with the other divisions, to most of its readers, as many of the extracts are taken from books which are now in the hands of very few.

The price of this book is one Dollar. Subscriptions will be received at this office, and the work procured for subscribers without any additional expense.



THE ANTI-MASONIC REVIEW, AND MAGAZINE.

BY HENRY DANA WARD, A. M. A RENOUNCING MASON.

THIS is the title of a new monthly work published in the city of New-York, and "intended to take note of the origin and history, of the pretensions and character, and of the standard works and productions of Free Masonry." We hail the appearance of this work, with unmingled delight. We believe it will prove a most powerful auxiliary to the cause of Anti-Masonry. The Editor is already favourably known to the public as the author of an octavo volume of 412 pages, published in New-York, May 1828, on the same subject, which has been generally admired.—The first number is entirely original, and gives satisfactory evidence that the editor is abundantly qualified for the task he has undertaken. He writes like a scholar and a Christian. The whole number is one continuous chain of sound, irresistible argument, —irresistible to all who are not bound by interest, or blinded by the mists of ignorance and prejudice. So much is it connected that we find it extremely difficult to make a single extract without marring its beauty and weakening its force. Take the following as one of his positions: for the proof and illustration the reader must go to the work itself.

"The grand object of Masonry is to deceive."

"For this it was formed, a box within a box, forty-three in number, and all empty; to this it is practised, deluding men with the belief, that it is most ancient and honourable, sacred and valuable, learned and mystical. For this it prays; for this it reads the Holy Scriptures; for this it gives public funerals. For this it trifles with the ark of the covenant and its holy utensils; with the consecrated garments of the Levitical priesthood; and with the reputation of Moses, and Solomon, and St. John. For this it claims a divine origin; presents itself on the same immutable foundation with divine revelation; and offers to guide to eternal happiness. For this it imitates the celebration of the Christian sacraments; impiously dedicates masonic priests to Jehovah, after the order of Melchisedeck; and professes to have and to teach the only true pronounciation of the name of the Almighty. For this it pretends to teach all the arts and sciences, besides government, religion, and the art of wonder working and foresaying things to come; for this it pretends to demonstrate moral truth by geometrical problems; and to give an accurate elucidation of science, both in theory and practice."

Again:

"Free Masonry displaces Christianity."

"If the institution have any specific object of pursuit, it should, like other societies, steadily set forth that object; but, if its object be independently to inculcate a reverence for the Deity, and love to our neighbour, as is often professed in the constitutions of Masonry, the institution undertakes too much, undertakes the proper office of Christianity; we disapprove its design, and dispense with its incompetent services.

"Very well," says a mason, "you are at liberty to do so; while with Washington and Franklin, and the good La Fayette, I both approve the design, and employ the services of Free Masonry."

"This is the thing we sadly fear, that men using the rickety steps of Free Masonry, to scale heaven, reject the sure way of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; that men harkening to the dogmas of a human institution, turn away their ears from the heavenly doctrines of the cross; that men seeking out to themselves this new found invention of Free Masonry, receive a stone for bread; and for a fish, a serpent.

"If any human institution offers itself to perform the proper office of Christianity, it should be rejected at once. Christianity will do its own work better than any contrivance we can use in its stead: and the very offer of *another institution* independently to inculcate in the human mind a reverence for the Deity, and love to our neighbour, is proof that such institution is an imposture. So certain as it is another institution, having for its grand object to inculcate religious fear and neighbourly love, so certain it is another Gospel, and not that of our Lord; and it should be rejected as a broken staff, "on which if a man lean it will pierce his hand."

The editor gives three reasons in justification of those who have violated their Masonic obligations by renouncing the institution. We have only room for the third.

"Our third position is diverse from the two former, and yet equally sufficient for our defence in making all necessary use of the oaths and mysteries of Free Masonry, to enable the candid reader to acquire a just estimate of the worth and character of that institution. The oath is prefaced with words to this effect: "The obligation you are about to take is not to interfere with your duty to God, or to your country."

"Now, we say it not lightly, but with a solemn view to the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, that any construction of our masonic obligations, which prevents us from using publicly the mysteries of Free Masonry, *so far as is necessary to show the false and depraved nature of the institution*, and its injurious tendency to infidelity and crime, does interfere with our duty both to God and our country; and, therefore, in *animum jusjurandum imponentis, by the express understanding of him who administered the oath*, we were made free in the night of our initiation, from any such construction of its words, as might ever interfere with our civil or religious duties.

"Our duty to promote the glory of God, and the welfare of our country, bids us declare, that Free Masonry is an impostor; a fraud upon its members, and upon the community; and, if in the further discharge of this duty, we bring any part of the mysteries of the institution to support our declaration, we are not prevented by our oath; for that is never to interfere with the sacred discharge of our civil and religious duty."

The *Anti-Masonic Review* is published once a month at No. 218 Pearl-street, New-York. The price is \$2 per annum, in advance, or \$2 50 after six months. It is impossible for us to keep pace with the operations of Anti-Masonry without diverting the Monitor from the great object it has in view, and for the promotion of which it stands pledged. We will, therefore, receive subscribers for the above work at this office, and we hope that many of our readers will be induced to become its patrons.

FAILURE OF THE ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH REFORMATION SOCIETIES IN ENGLAND.

Last week a meeting was held in Bristol to establish a Protestant Association Society, to counteract the spread of the errors of Popery, and to aid the cause of the second Reformation. Capt. Gordon, a strenuous anti-Catholic, and the Rev. Mr. Thorpe, a dissenting Minister of the independent denomination, spoke and took a very prominent part in these proceedings, as well as several clergy of the established church. When a motion for a committee to carry these objects into effect was put from the chair.

Wintur Harris, Esq. said he had an addition to propose to the motion before the meeting for appointing the committee; and he looked with a perfect confidence to the Rev. Mr. Thorpe, who had proposed such committee, and who as a Pastor of a church of Protestant dissenters, must cordially approve of the suggestion which he would now offer for the adoption of the meeting, viz. "That it be an instruction to the said committee to examine the Liturgy of the church of England, as by law established at the Reformation, and in use at the present day, and to report to the next general meeting of this Society whether there still remain in such Liturgy any relics of Popery, and whether it would be conducive to the principles established at the Reformation, and to the interests of this society, that such relics of Popery should be expunged from the Liturgy, and to consider of the best means by which such expulsion may be secured."

If the society about to be formed should be successful in prevailing on the church of England to adopt such proceeding, sure he was that it would be the proudest day that the church had ever seen. As a conscientious dissenter, he, in common with multitudes of others, could not enter the doors of the church, because he found there so large a remnant of what appeared to him the superstitious relics of the church of Rome. Now, if the Society would labour in this way, it would then indeed deserve the title of the second Reformation—[Hear, hear.]

Mr. Harris's amendment appeared to act like electricity on the gentlemen on the platform. Capt. Gordon characterised it as an unprincipled attempt to interrupt the proceedings of the meeting; a charge which was indignantly repelled by Mr. Harris—Mr. Harris, in further explanation of his conduct, reminded Capt. Gordon, that he had charged against the Catholics, as one of their obnoxious doctrines, the power of absolution; and Mr. H. insisted that the same doctrine was still in *esse* in the Liturgy of the church of England. (Murmurs.) Mr. Harris then read, from the book of Common prayer, in the service for visitation of the sick, the words pronounced by the clergy of the church:—"I absolve thee from all thy sins;" and he further observed, that at every ordination of priests, the bishop laying his hands on the candidate, used the very words which had that day been quoted by the gallant Captain against the Catholics:—"Whosoever sins thou remittest, they are remitted, and whosoever sins thou retainest they are retained."

The appeal made by Mr. Harris to Mr. Thorpe, produced the most embarrassing effect upon that Rev. gentleman, and the reading of those passages seemed to be felt with great force by the whole meeting.—Every effort to resume the proceedings, proved fruitless, and the meeting broke up in disorder.
Eng. Paper.

REV. MR. WOLF.

The Jewish Expositor for October mentions the receipt of a letter from the Rev. Joseph Wolf, dated Harbor of Beyroot, May 23, 1828, in which he states his intention of remaining in Palestine, unless directly forbidden by the Pacha, notwithstanding the British Consul and the American and English missionaries had all left for Malta. Mr. Wolf, with his wife Lady Georgiana, had been spending a number of weeks at Alexandria, in Egypt, and did not experience the least interruption from the public authorities in their missionary labor among the Jews.
N. Y. Obs.

EUROPE

Is in a very curious and interesting condition. *Russia* appears baffled in her designs upon *Turkey*, at least for the present, after suffering immense losses of men in battle and by sickness, through the hardships and privations which they encountered. *Turkey* has been roused to exertions far beyond expectation, and with great firmness, has met the numerous difficulties that encompassed and embarrassed her. We hear little about the *Greeks*—the war against the few that remain of them for combat, having been probably arrested by the invasion of the *Russians*, the presence of the French army in the Morea, and the powerful fleets cruising in the Archipelago, &c. *France* appears to be gathering her strength as if to meet some great emergency. She is somewhat disordered in finances, and a little distracted by political feuds, but possesses a mighty power for action whenever it shall be required. *Great Britain*, having gigantic means for annoyance or to support her pretensions, seems looking on, not well knowing what to do—pressed down by her public debt and unsettled in her domestic politics, there is added an excessive excitement in Ireland, and the apprehension of a scarcity of bread; but she has an overwhelming naval force fitted for action, and her posts are strongly garrisoned and well supplied with troops for extraordinary operations. *Austria* has gathered and arranged a mighty military force, and may be said to be lying on her arms, waiting events—and ready to act against either the *Russians* or the *Turks*, as policy shall dictate or necessity impose. *Spain* is in the enjoyment of every blessing which the most stupid legitimacy can confer upon a country—miserable and poor—agriculture, manufactures and commerce destroyed, and without safety for persons or property; the whole nation being apparently over-run with gangs, or parties of loyal or disaffected persons, intollerant and wicked priests, or outrageous brigands, preying upon one another, and all uniting to oppress the poor. *Portugal* may be considered as in a state of revolution—the worthless Miguel, however, has made himself master of the throne, and filled the dungeons with those whom the executioner suffered to remain alive. The young queen has arrived in England—but whether any great effort will be made in her behalf does not yet appear. We rather suppose that nothing will be done in the present unsettled state of things, unless by cautious negotiations. *Sweden* and *Denmark*, with *Prussia*, the *Netherlands*, and the *German* kingdoms and states, are quiet and probably prosperous—a much increased attention having been paid to manufactures and internal improvements, the people are rapidly recovering from the effects of the desolating wars in which they were not long since engaged, and population is advancing. *Italy* remains as it was—divided into numerous principalities or powers, and every day descending further and further from her ancient dignity. Some few of the states are comparatively prosperous—but on the whole, except *Spain*, *Italy* is the most degraded and miserable of the civilized world—filled with robbers and beggars, and princes and priests.

The common opinion seems to be that a general war will pretty speedily take place, though for what particular cause is not stated, except to grow out of the condition of *Turkey* and *Greece*. In this state of things it is well that we are so far removed from the scene of action, and have so little interest or feeling in the politics or quarrels of the old world. By preserving our present peaceful relations with all nations, we may profit by their dissensions, while regretting the waste of human life and human happiness through the jealousy and ambition or withering oppression of kings.
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